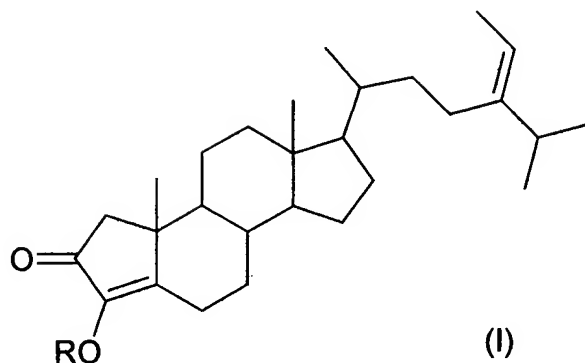


**In the Claims:**

**Claim 1** (currently amended) ~~Novel steroids~~ A steroid possessing of the general formula I:



wherein R is selected from the group consisting of a hydrogen, a lower alkyl radical ~~having from~~ of 1 to 7 carbon atoms, a lower cycloalkyl radical ~~having from~~ of 3 to 7 carbon atoms, an aryl radical ~~having from~~ of 5 to 10 carbon atoms, an aryl alkyl radical wherein the alkyl radical has ~~from~~ 1 to 6 carbon atoms, ~~or an acyl moiety derived from~~ of an aliphatic carboxylic acid.

**Claim 2** (currently amended) The tautomeric forms of ~~the novel steroids~~ a steroid ~~according to~~ of Claim 1.

**Claim 3** (currently amended) A metallic complexes complex of the compounds compound of claims claim 1 wherein R is a hydrogen.

**Claim 4** (currently amended)      ~~Blocking means for the steroids~~ A steroid of general formula I according to claim 1, wherein the ketonic function is blocked in the form of a member selected from the group consisting of ketal, thioketal, a hemithioketal, an oxime or an optically-active or a racemic (dicarboxyalkylene)ketal

**Claim 5** (currently amended)      A compound according to ~~any of the preceding~~ of ~~claims~~ claim 1, that is 2-oxo 3-hydroxy 25-ethylidene  $\Delta$ -nor-cholest-3-ene.

**Claim 6** (currently amended)      A compound according of claim 1, ~~that~~ which is 2-oxo 3-acetoxy 25-ethylidene  $\Delta$ -nor-cholest-3-ene.

**Claim 7** (currently amended)      A compound according of claim 1, ~~that~~ which is 2-oxo 3-methoxy 25-ethylidene  $\Delta$ -nor-cholest-3-ene.

Cancel **Claims 8 to 14** and add the following claims.

**Claim 15** (new)      A process for the preparation of a compound of claim 1 wherein R is other than hydrogen or acyl comprising reacting a compound of formula I wherein R is hydrogen in an inert

solvent with a diazoalkane selected from the group consisting of halide, sulfate and a tosylate of alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl.

**Claim 16** (new)            A process for the preparation of a compound of formula I of claim I wherein R is acyl of an aliphatic carboxylic acid comprising reacting a compound of claim 1 wherein R is hydrogen with an acylating agent of an aliphatic carboxylic acid in a polar aprotic solvent in the presence of an acylating catalyst.

**Claim 17** (new)            A method of increasing the synthesis of collagen in warm-blooded animals comprising administering to a warm-blooded animal in need thereof a composition containing an effective amount of a compound of claim 1.

**Claim 18** (new)            The method of claim 17 wherein the composition is applied to the skin of the warm-blooded animal.

**Claim 19** (new)            The method of claim 17 wherein the composition also contains an estrogenic compound.

**Claim 20** (new)            The method of claim 19 wherein the estrogenic compound is selected from the group consisting of estradiol and an ether of estradiol.